

# **Crime Victims Needs Assessment**

*Prepared for*

**The Wisconsin Department of Justice  
Office of Crime Victim Services**

**and**

**Citizens of Judicial District 4**

*by:*

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# Introduction

**I**n 2005 the Wisconsin Department of Justice, Office of Crime Victim Services began a journey to develop a Crime Victim Needs Assessment process to document all crime-related services across the State of Wisconsin and to understand the needs of counties and tribal communities. The goal is to document crime victims' unmet needs and communities' priorities related to crime victim services. As such, this project:


- ✓ Gathers comprehensive/consistent information from Wisconsin counties and tribes
- ✓ Assists communities to collaboratively set priorities
- ✓ Disseminates results in user-friendly format
- ✓ Reflects viewpoints of crime victims

In 2006 World Bridge Research began assisting the Department of Justice with this Crime Victim Needs Assessment effort using an approach called Participatory Action Research (PAR). PAR was developed in contrast to conventional research approaches. PAR is characterized by having three primary components: 1) an iterative process for conducting research that includes reflection and action; 2) having community members and stakeholders involved with the research process; and 3) using findings to promote positive community change. These three approaches are interwoven throughout the project design and provide for a richer and more culturally sensitive assessment than a researcher directed traditional approach. Essentially PAR is research which involves all relevant parties in actively examining together current action (which they experience as problematic) in order to change and improve it.

*Essentially Participatory Action Research (PAR) is research which involves all relevant parties in actively examining together current action (which they experience as problematic) in order to change and improve it.*

To document all crime-related services and unmet needs across Wisconsin, the Needs Assessment project began by interviewing key informants (victim/witness specialists/coordinators, law enforcement agencies [county and municipal], community service providers and representatives from local departments of human services) in each county and tribal community. Appointments were made with individuals and groups to ask them questions about:

- ✓ Community composition
- ✓ Services available to victims of crime
- ✓ Community assets
- ✓ Unmet needs of crime victims
- ✓ The underserved
- ✓ Crime trends
- ✓ Victim rights
- ✓ Innovative programs



Key informants were also asked to fill out a questionnaire about unmet needs at the end of the interview. The survey and interview questions shared some similar topics with the interviews providing an opportunity for the research team to learn the insights and reasons behind interviewees' perspectives. A second round of key informant interviews were held with named victim service agencies and other agencies or groups providing victim services programming that were deemed innovative and not known by victim service grant makers.

To build upon the iterative process for assessment and action, findings from the key informant interviews and surveys were presented at the District 4 Priority Setting meeting on March 18, 2008. The meeting featured two parts – reflection and discussion about the findings from the interviews and surveys followed by a consensus building method using group participation technologies to identify recommendations for funding priorities for crime victim services needs and gaps.

In a final step for the district, the emerging recommendations were incorporated into an internet based survey tool which sought to prioritize the recommendations. Interviewed key informants, participants of the district meeting and all other known service providers in the district were asked to complete the survey.

*The three initial steps – interviews and surveys, district meeting and on-line survey – are summarized in this report.*

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These key informant interviews and surveys are to be rounded out with interviews and focus groups with victims/survivors of crime, members of underserved communities and representatives of statewide organizations. Also, an advisory group of victims, former victims and survivors from across the state oversees various aspects of the Needs Assessment's implementation.

# Summary

Judicial District 4 is made up of the following five Wisconsin counties: Calumet, Fond du Lac, Manitowoc, Sheboygan and Winnebago. Every county in the district was represented in the needs assessment process with 21 individuals interviewed, 19 surveyed, 13 participating at the district meeting and seven responding to the follow-up online survey.

The following summaries were created from the key informant interviews and surveys collected in Judicial District 4.

## **Crime trends:**

- ✓ Drugs
- ✓ Thefts
- ✓ Child abuse
- ✓ Gun crimes
- ✓ Gang violence

## **Assets - commonly referred to services:**

- ✓ Victim/witness services
- ✓ Shelters and domestic violence services
- ✓ Sexual assault services
- ✓ 24 hour crisis line
- ✓ Emergency room services
- ✓ Parenting education
- ✓ Short- and long-term counseling and therapy services
- ✓ Faith-based services

## **Underserved crime victims:**

- ✓ Rural victims of crime
- ✓ Persons with physical disabilities
- ✓ Persons with mental health issues
- ✓ Non-English speaking victims (Latino, Asian & European)
- ✓ Elderly victims of crime

## **Surveys identified:**

- ✓ Victims with mental health issues
- ✓ Elderly victims of crime
- ✓ Victims with developmental disabilities
- ✓ Asian victims of crime

## **Existing innovative services:**

- ✓ Child Advocacy Center

**Programs on key informants' "wishlist" include:**

1. Better transportation options
2. More therapists
3. Need for specialized agencies and services here instead of going outside county (services for children)
4. Victim services at the police level
5. Need for round-the-clock service for all services
6. More assistance with identity theft cases
7. Substance abuse treatment in rural areas
8. Funds to update website
9. Sexual assault nurse examiners
10. Court (certified) interpreters
11. More community education programs

**A**t the district meeting, participants reflected on the above findings and used a consensus process to answer the question "What are our recommendations for 2008 funding priorities for victim services?" In a follow-up online survey District 4 residents were asked to prioritize the recommendations. The ranked recommendations were:

1. Maintain or Expand Existing Funding for Services
2. Evidence Based Investigation and Prosecution for Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence & Child Abuse
3. Enhanced Court Intervention Process for Victims and Families  
Provide Affordable Legal Assistance & Services to Victims (tie for third)
4. Specialized Intervention and Treatment Services for Victims and Families
5. Victim Impact and Trauma Training for Professionals and Community
6. Expansion of Youth Crime and Violence Prevention
7. Specialized Treatment Programs for Perpetrators
8. Provide Transportation to Access Services for Victim
9. Provide Affordable Child Care



A complete depiction of the ideas and victim needs that make up each funding recommendation can be found on page 16.

# Findings from Key Informant Interviews

**K**ey informants from Judicial District 4 representing victim/witness specialists/coordinators, sheriff's offices, community service providers and departments of human services were interviewed in November - December, 2007. A total of 21 individuals were interviewed (15 women and 6 men) in five interview settings. The following summarizes the themes that emerged from these interviews.

## ***Crime Trends***

**S**ome of the emerging crime trends that were discussed by key informants include: crimes relating to drugs including heroin, alcohol and prescription drugs; thefts of automobiles and thefts from houses and autos; child abuse; gun crimes and gang violence.

Drugs: It was suggested that, "Alcohol and drug abuse is on the increase." The role of drugs and alcohol is a topic that was discussed by many key informants. One key informant states, "Drug and alcohol problems are involved with all crimes."

It appears that heroin use and the theft of and "misuse" of prescription drugs are increasing concerns in District 4. Key informants indicate that prescription drugs are easy to get from various sources and can be procured for free or little money. Theft of prescription drugs from residential homes is also a problem. One informant states, "We have a county-wide program for notifying pharmacists when a crime involving prescription drugs occurs."

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Child Abuse: Many key informants discussed how child abuse cases are seemingly more severe in recent years. Some attributed the problem to younger parents without a great deal of parenting knowledge as partially responsible. Others discussed the trend of sexual assaults of the children of illegal immigrants and child pornography use as increasing.

Other Crimes: Theft of automobiles and thefts from houses and autos, gun crimes and gang violence were identified as crime trends in the interviews with key informants. However, insight into the factors contributing to the trends related to these crimes was not discussed in much detail during the interviews.

## ***Underserved Populations***

**I**n key informant interviews those viewed as underserved are rural victims of crime, persons with physical disabilities, persons with mental health issues, non-English speaking victims (Latino, Asian & European) and elderly victims of crime.



Many key informants discussed how crime victim services are offered in the county seat, and while there are some services available in rural areas (satellite offices), but services are typically underused or not used at all. Some key informants discussed the lack of interpreters for Spanish speaking, as well as Asian and European non-English speaking victims of crime.

### ***Innovative Services and “Wishlist”***

When asked what kinds of services victims are commonly referred to for assistance and support, many key informants indicate: victim/witness programs, shelters and domestic violence services, sexual assault programs, 24-hour crisis line, emergency room services, parenting education, short and long term counseling and therapy services and faith-based services. Some communities did identify a Child Advocacy Center as a service perceived to be unique or innovative.

On the same note, key informants also identified programs and services they wish they had available in their local community:

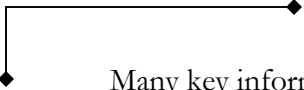
1. Better transportation options
2. More therapists
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9. Sexual assault nurse examiners
10. Court (certified) interpreters
11. More community education programs

Assets key informants wish were available include:

- ✓ Job placement services
- ✓ Better insurance options
- ✓ Affordable housing

### ***Victim Rights Difficult to Enforce***

Most informants discussed the victim rights notification process used in their community. When asked about which rights were difficult to enforce many key informants said restitution, speedy trials and victim waiting rooms separate from defendants.



Many key informants discussed how restitution is ordered, but rarely collected even after civil judgment

“Restitution information is easy, getting them their money is nearly impossible.... But even in the cases when the judge orders restitution the money is hard to collect.”

Some informants suggest that the judicial system really does not allow for speedy disposition of trial. Others discussed how their courthouses do not have separate waiting rooms for victims and defendants.

# Findings from Unmet Needs Survey Results

Nineteen individuals representing law enforcement, victim/witness programs, human services and community-based victim service programs completed the Unmet Needs Survey in the five counties that comprise Judicial District 4.

## ***Who are Underserved?***

Who are underserved?	N = 19	%
Victims with mental health issues	12	63%
Elderly victims	12	63%
Victims with developmental disabilities	10	53%
Asian victims	10	53%

When given a list of potentially underserved populations, District 4 interviewees strongly identified the list above. This list supplements the findings from the interviews and points out a few community groups that did not come readily to people's minds during the interview discussions.

## ***Community Coordination and Unmet Needs***

When asked, "On a scale of 1 to 4 with 1 and 2 being 'Not At All' and 3 and 4 being 'Very Much', please rate the extent to which you believe that the current service system..." the following represent the majority **"Very Much"** response. Respondents could also answer "Don't Know" or "Not Applicable".

The current service system...	"Very Much" Response	N = 19	%
Is integrated, that is, agencies are by various means linked together to allow services to be provided in a coordinated and comprehensive manner.	Very Much	17	90%
Provides services that are individualized.	Very Much	16	84%
Provides services that are accessible.	Very Much	14	74%
Prevents crime victims from getting lost in the complex system.	Very Much	14	74%

The current service system...	"Very Much" Response	N = 19	%
Creates opportunities for joint planning across different types of agencies (e.g., legal, mental health, physical health, public safety, domestic violence, child welfare).	Very Much	14	74%
Shares information about what services agencies currently deliver or are planning to deliver.	Very Much	14	74%
Fosters a "big picture" understanding of the service system and the roles/responsibilities of the agencies that constitute that system.	Very Much	13	68%
Ensures that agencies have timely access to client records in ways that do not violate client confidentiality and/or rights.	Very Much	13	68%
Addresses the issues of trauma	Very Much	13	68%
Provides services that are gender specific.	Very Much	12	63%
Allows different points of view to exist among organizations.	Very Much	12	63%
Is integrated, that is, agencies are by various means linked together to allow services to be provided in a coordinated and comprehensive manner.	Very Much	11	58%
Can be accessed at different stages of victim recovery process.	Very Much	10	53%
Involves crime victims in improving and/or changing services.	Very Much	9	47%
Develops clear community-wide goals and plans.	Very Much	9	47%

When asked, "On a scale of 1 to 4 with 1 and 2 being 'Not At All' and 3 and 4 being 'Very Much', please rate the extent to which you believe that the current service system..." the following represent the majority "**Not at All**" response. Respondents could also answer "Don't Know or "Not Applicable".

The current service system...	"Not at All" Response	N = 19	%
Provides services that are culturally appropriate.	Not at All	11	58%
Provides services that incorporate non-traditional approaches.	Not at All	8	42%

### ***Community Assets***

When asked, "On a scale of 1 to 4 with 1 and 2 being 'Not At All' and 3 and 4 being 'Very Much', please rate the availability of these community assets," the following represent the majority "**Very Much**" response. Respondents could also answer "Don't Know" or "Not Applicable".

Services and Supports	"Very Much" Response	N = 37	%
Substance Abuse Assessment, Prevention and Treatment	Very Much	13	68%
Food Assistance	Very Much	13	68%
Senior Center / Programs	Very Much	13	68%
Recreation / Sports	Very Much	12	63%
Community Service Learning	Very Much	11	58%
Health Education	Very Much	11	58%
Services for Persons with Disabilities	Very Much	11	58%
Support Groups	Very Much	11	58%
Housing Assistance	Very Much	10	52%
Supervised Visitation / Exchange Center	Very Much	10	53%
Job Training / Job Treatment	Very Much	10	53%
Violence Prevention	Very Much	9	47%
Mental Health Services	Very Much	9	47%
Low Cost or Free Clothing, Furniture and Housewares	Very Much	9	47%

Services and Supports	"Very Much" Response	N = 19	%
Family Support Center / Services	Very Much	8	42%
After-School Programs	Very Much	8	42%
Mentoring	Very Much	7	37%

When asked, "On a scale of 1 to 4 with 1 and 2 being 'Not At All' and 3 and 4 being 'Very Much'", please rate the availability of these community," the following represent the majority "**Not at All**" response. Respondents could also answer "Don't Know" or "Not Applicable".

Services and Supports	"Not at All" Response	N = 19	%
Early Childhood Programs like Headstart	Not at All	16	84%
Information and Referral Hotline	Not at All	16	84%
Transportation Assistance	Not at All	13	68%

# District Meeting Findings and Prioritization Survey

**T**hirteen people representing the counties of Calumet, Fond du Lac, Manitowoc, Sheboygan and Winnebago in Judicial District 4 attended the Priority Setting Meeting on March 18, 2008, in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin. The group included two victim/witness coordinators, seven domestic violence or sexual assault community organization staff members, two department of human services staff members, and two corrections professionals. One representative from the Office of Crime Victim Services (OCVS) was also present.

An overview of the Office of Crime Victim Services needs assessment project was presented including the findings from interviews with people and the surveys conducted throughout the Judicial District 4 during November - December, 2007.

For the meeting, the findings discussed previously in this report were grouped to create a cohesive, flowing story of the interview and survey progress. The sections included: Crime Trends; Assets, Underserved Populations, Innovative Services and “Wishlist”, and Crime Victims Rights.

## ***Crime Trends***

**T**he group discussed what crime trends mirror what they see in your work and what is missing:

- ✓ Connection between child abuse and drug use and the criminality that goes with the drug use lifestyle. This is also linked to domestic violence. It's difficult to get people treatment as well as safety in their lives.
- ✓ Economic issues are affecting everyone.
- ✓ Seeing more mental health issues affecting crime. It's linked to abuse, drug use, and struggles with economic issues.
- ✓ People are a lot more narcissistic and this can be linked to use of drugs and people becoming bad parents.
- ✓ Children who are former victims of crime are becoming perpetrators of crime.
- ✓ Increase of teen sex especially with age difference between teenagers.
- ✓ Sexual assault including teen and elder victims.
- ✓ Use of alcohol and drugs is in almost every crime.
- ✓ Kids playing with guns especially teenagers. Youth are ruining their lives and disrespecting self and others. The influence by video games and violence prevalent in society seems to be at the heart of the issue. There is a curiosity that goes along with an immature mind and fascination with guns. We need to send the message that parents need to get more involved in their children's lives. The community through letters to the editor expressed dissatisfaction with the system when system tries to hold youth accountable for bad choices – dangerous driving, pointing gun at friend's head.

- ✓ Level of gang violence seems to be coming into the area – some parents are at a loss of how to control children, parents are working and can't be with children especially teens.

### ***Assets, “Wishlist” and Underserved Populations***

**A** ssets or programs that we do not have:

- ✓ Mental health services exists but long wait to get into appointment
- ✓ Housing assistance exists but waiting list is very long
- ✓ For children mentoring exists but only if the child is in the system

The Child Advocacy Center is used to support forensic interviewing and medical assessments for child victims. Great center where all systems come together and help the child by not making them go through multiple interviews and assessments because everyone is present at the one event. In the district a center exists in one county and is used by organizations from neighboring counties. Other counties have tried to create child advocacy centers but turf and other issues have been barriers to success. Other counties have used other methods to obtain similar results for interviewing, although they need to send children to hospitals for medical exams. In one county, six people are trained as forensic interviewers including social workers and law enforcement.

The group discussed the following groups as additions to the underserved populations list:

- ✓ Growing trend in crimes against the elderly – economic, physical and emotional abuse. Difficult to prosecute even with new changes in the law. Family members as the perpetrators is on the rise. People are living longer.
- ✓ Marginalization by systems for Spanish speakers is high. Need to train service providers more. Language is barrier and legal status is keeping people away from seeking services. When hired bilingual workers they are overwhelmed with the need – we could hire more and more workers – the need is great. There are also cultural barriers – social workers who work with victims of child and domestic abuse aren't always aware of the nuances of culture and lifestyle.
- ✓ Developmentally challenged folks who are victims of sexual assault are underserved – very difficult for prosecution to occur, justice system professionals need to learn how to work with victims as witnesses, people need special training.

The group wanted to include the following as new services or things that should be in place to help with crime victim needs:

- ✓ Affordable child care for all shifts
- ✓ Legal services – family and civil law; representation is available but they can take only limited numbers of cases
- ✓ More therapists especially those that will take Medicare
- ✓ Judges and GALs that are more knowledgeable about family violence issues
- ✓ More attention and training about trauma response and trauma informed services
- ✓ More staff or staff time





## ***Crime Victims' Rights***

**T**he group wanted to add the following issues to the list of victim rights concerns:

- ✓ Defendants can seek to change the judge but the victim has no right to that request.
- ✓ Long time to wait for trial is very hard for victim but want to recognize that victims might be well served by thorough investigation especially DNA and this takes time.
- ✓ Restitution is very hard to get people to pay – tax intercept behind child support as possibility; this area is the MOST important need for the group.
- ✓ Witness waiting room might exist but no bathrooms available.
- ✓ Fond du Lac lost services for young offenders and young offenders in the making.

For the second part of the meeting, participants incorporated the interview findings and their reflections into a consensus process to answer the question “What are our recommendations for 2008 funding priorities for victim services?” The recommendations list appears below and more details are available in Appendix A.

**I**n a final step to understand the victim services needs in District 4, these emerging recommendations were incorporated into an internet based survey tool which sought to prioritize the recommendations. Interviewed key informants, participants from the district meeting and all other known service providers in the district were asked to complete the survey. Seven individuals voted to prioritize the needs.

The ranked recommendations were:

1. Maintain or Expand Existing Funding for Services
2. Evidence Based Investigation and Prosecution for Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence & Child Abuse
3. Enhanced Court Intervention Process for Victims and Families  
Provide Affordable Legal Assistance & Services to Victims (tie for third)
4. Specialized Intervention and Treatment Services for Victims and Families
5. Victim Impact and Trauma Training for Professionals and Community
6. Expansion of Youth Crime and Violence Prevention
7. Specialized Treatment Programs for Perpetrators
8. Provide Transportation to Access Services for Victim
9. Provide Affordable Child Care

# Implications

For people from District 4, the call to **Maintain or Expand Existing Funding for Services** was the most important funding priority for 2008. Captured in this priority is the strong need for services currently being provided and the dearth of additional funds for new, innovative or even basic programming in areas that do not currently have coverage. This priority echoes the sentiment in several of the interviewees' "wishlist" items that call for more or better services as well as an expansion of services such as substance abuse treatment into rural areas. Specific on the "wishlist" was the need to place services where victims live instead of requiring them to travel to other communities for assistance.

The crimes of sexual assault, domestic violence and child abuse require specific attention by the organizations and systems that assist crime victims. These requirements inspired the funding priority, **Evidence Based Investigation and Prosecution for Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence & Child Abuse**, to be ranked second in this district. This priority called for specialized and innovative services such as sexual assault nurse examiners and child advocacy centers; two items repeatedly mentioned as needed services for crime victims. With both of these services, the success of already existing models in other communities promoted the prioritization of the services for those communities without them. This priority would build on some of the commonly referred to services and thus improve investigation and prosecution of these crimes. In addition, throughout the assessment process, the crimes of sexual assault, domestic violence and child abuse were identified as prevalent for many populations including some of those seen as underserved in the district.

This priority is followed by two others focused on assisting victims through the legal system - **Enhanced Court Intervention Process for Victims and Families** and **Provide Affordable Legal Assistance & Services to Victims**. With the first priority, Enhanced Court Intervention Process, all victims of crime would be better served. Additional staff, more accommodating courthouses and access to the system through interpreters are included as needed services to improve and augment the process that victims must navigate. This priority seeks to address non-English speaking victims who were identified as underserved in this district during both the interviews and district meeting.

In addition to Enhanced Court Intervention Process, this district ranked **Affordable Legal Assistance and Services to Victims** as third on their priority list. Throughout the Needs Assessment, a call for all forms of help for victims through the legal system emerged in this district. Civil, criminal and family law were all mentioned as areas where victims of crime needed professional help that they could afford which district members acknowledged might need to include free services. This priority calls for both legal assistance in the form of lawyers and legal representation as well as legal services which could include legal advocacy and information to help victims understand the system and their options.

The fourth and fifth ranked priorities provide complimentary aspects of trauma-informed services for victims of crime. Services and treatment is clearly identified in **Specialized Intervention and Treatment Services for Victims and Families** while the vital training and education needed to provide quality victim response is prioritized in **Victim Impact and Trauma Training for Professionals and Community**.

# Appendix A

What are our recommendations for 2008 funding priorities?							
Victim Impact and Trauma Training for Professionals and Community	Specialized Intervention and Treatment Services for Victims and Families	Evidence Based Investigation and Prosecution for Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence & Child Abuse	Enhanced Court Intervention Process for Victims and Families	Specialized Treatment Programs for Perpetrators	Expansion of Youth Crime and Violence Prevention	Provide Transportation to Access Services for Victims	Provide Affordable Child Care
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Trauma education</li> <li>✓ Trauma training for professionals to support victims</li> <li>✓ Training for law enforcement, attorneys, judges and treatment providers—post traumatic stress related</li> <li>✓ Community education campaign</li> <li>✓ Sensitivity training for staff</li> <li>✓ Services for providers for vicarious trauma</li> <li>✓ Training for victim sensitivity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Extra money for underserved counties</li> <li>✓ Resources and services for male victims</li> <li>✓ Additional transitional housing for victims of DV</li> <li>✓ Specialized treatment resources for victims</li> <li>✓ Therapists to help parenting</li> <li>✓ Family strengthening education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ SANE program for ER for SA and DV (non fatal strangulation)</li> <li>✓ SANE for Sheboygan County</li> <li>✓ Expand employees and equipment at the crime lab</li> <li>✓ Child advocacy center</li> <li>✓ Expand child advocacy center concept statewide</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Additional monies for DAS Office (for ADAs/ victim services)</li> <li>✓ Money to hire clerical assistant for DA</li> <li>✓ Waiting area for victims at courthouse</li> <li>✓ Court interpreter services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Expand/ start perpetrator treatment</li> <li>✓ Perpetrator programs and counseling in jail</li> <li>✓ Treatment programming for youthful sexual assault offenders— for unique populations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Increased prevention efforts and funding</li> <li>✓ Preventive school based services - e.g. health class, curriculum development</li> <li>✓ Mentoring for boys</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Funding transportation to receive services</li> <li>✓ Transportation expansion of transportation services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Child care after school for working poor</li> <li>✓ Affordable child care</li> </ul>
						<b>Provide Affordable Legal Assistance &amp; Services to Victims</b>	<b>Maintain or Expand Existing Funding for Services</b>
						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Legal services - affordable options</li> <li>✓ Legal representation for all victims</li> <li>✓ Legal assistance for civil issues— landlords &amp; divorce</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Funding shelters, services and training</li> <li>✓ Money to maintain sexual assault services including administrative</li> </ul>